

Task Force on Improving NEPA
Exhibit 2
 Testimony of Regional Forester Gail Kimbell
 April 23, 2005 – Spokane, Washington
Chronology Jimtown Vegetation Project

May, 2000	Scoping initiated for project. The purpose of the project is to create sustainable conditions less prone to stand-replacing fire within a ponderosa pine forest.
May, 2001	Decision Notice issued. The decision implements 860 acres of forest thinning using timber harvest with subsequent underburning and 220 acres of underburning alone.
June, 2001	Native Ecosystems Council appeals the decision.
August, 2001	Regional Forester affirms the decision, appeal denied.
October, 2001	Native Ecosystems Council files a complaint in District Court to permanently enjoin the project.
July, 2003	<p>A human-caused fire which originated within the Jimtown Project area was reported about noon west of the Jimtown Road. By nightfall the fire had jumped the county road, forced evacuation of the area residents, taken out the power for the nearby community of York, and burned about 600 acres. The fire ultimately burned just over 1,000 acres and cost \$1 million to suppress.</p> <p>Approximately 50% of the project area slated for thinning was burned in a mixed lethal fire or running crown fire. The fire spread was quite rapid and fire intensity was severe. For that reason, firefighting activities were essentially limited to slurry drops by air tankers and flanking actions by ground forces with more aggressive action along defensible spaces on private property. FS personnel have concluded that completion of the fuel reduction actions tied to the Jimtown project would have allowed firefighters to safely take more direct action against a lower intensity ground fire, resulting in much quicker control with fewer burned acres.</p>
March, 2004	The U.S. District Court issues an order denying Native Ecosystem Council's motion for Summary Judgement.
March, 2004	Native Ecosystem appeals the District Court ruling to the Ninth Circuit Court.
February, 2005	Ninth Circuit panel hears oral argument of the case. As of 4/19/05, the case is awaiting disposition.